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Francis A. Stout

FRANCIS AQUILA STOUT



NEW-YORK

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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

By E. S. Nadal



THE relations to business, charity, and such public matters, of the subject of this little book have been spoken of by others more conversant with them than I am. These gentlemen have described the important character of Mr. Stout's services to the State survey, and to the scheme for building an inter-oceanic canal in Nicaragua, and of his labors for reform and charitable objects. But to me, who was

a close friend of his, has been set the task of giving some account of the personality of Mr. Stout. His devotion to public concerns, however, was an important part of his character. It was one of the qualities which made him such good company. The attraction of these subjects is that they take men out of the dull, narrow, and trivial concerns of their daily life. Men are more interesting if they care for them than if they care only for their private business or personal affairs. It is one of our American social misfortunes that so few men are greatly interested in them. Mr. Stout's acquaintance with, and his lively curiosity regarding, these themes added to the interest of his character and conversation. His attention to them, however, was not merely that of the observer. It was a practical interest that he had

as well. He wished to have a hand in them. I think that his long residence in France, where his interest in public matters was necessarily that of a looker-on, had had the result of giving a special zest to the interest he took in public affairs at home. He knew France extremely well, was greatly interested in the affairs of that country, and indeed took a lively and intelligent interest in the course of affairs in Europe. During his foreign residence, however, I dare say that a man with so active a mind must have felt regret that his interest could only be that of a spectator. In this country, on the other hand, his feeling seemed to be: "Here is my country and city; here I am at home, and may take my part with others of my countrymen in movements relating to great affairs."

He had indeed very superior gifts for public occupations. These talents were mainly the result of his unusual knowledge of human nature. It is rare to meet any one better versed in men than he was. His perceptions of men's minds, besides being large, were very delicate and subtle. And he had a practical tact to match these mental qualities. He would, by the way, have made an excellent diplomatist. He had unusual skill in approaching men, the foundation of which talent was a broad comprehension of the situation in which he approached them, united with natural kindness and sympathy. I call to mind a number of illustrations of this quality, many of which came under my own observation. This may serve as an instance. Once he had occasion to ask a favor of the late Mr. John Mor-

risey at a time when Mr. Morrisey was a member of the State legislature and in a position to aid Mr. Stout in a certain public undertaking which he had much at heart. He went to see Mr. Morrisey, to whom he was unknown, and in a few words explained his business and the service he desired of him; and he did it in such a manner that the ex-prize-fighter, evidently touched and pleased, grasped him by the hand and said, "I will," in a way that was almost fervent. I should add that Mr. Morrisey kept his word. It is a trivial incident, but characteristic. Mr. Stout's success in this case was due to the comprehension which he had of men, and to his nice sense of the manner of approach which would be most agreeable to Mr. Morrisey; but it was probably also in part the result of the fact that

he had a real sympathy and appreciation for a man who, from such beginnings as Mr. Morrissey's, had obtained a position of influence and a public character certainly as good as that of many men whose opportunities had been better.

In the years of my first acquaintance with him he was very much occupied with public affairs. How often at that time, on coming into the old club on Fifteenth Street very late at night (for Mr. Stout's hours were very late), have I seen him, when the club looked quiet and deserted and the waiters weary, in the little room to the right of the hall, alone, and reading the paper with an absorbed expression peculiar to him. Perhaps we would have a half-hour's talk, and he would be in the friendliest and most sympathetic of moods, and as

a mark of especial friendship would give me some piece of information known only to the initiated and the very well informed. Or perhaps he would be closeted with one or more of his chosen friends, deeply engaged in consultation respecting some new movement for the advantage of the state. A man much in his company at this time, and who always remained one of his dearest friends, was the late Albert Gallatin Browne. Browne was a highly cultivated man, of wide and exact information and of a most honorable and gentle disposition, in whose dark and handsome features, Italian in character, one easily read an ingenuous disposition and warm and affectionate impulses, and whose portly figure concealed as brave a heart as any Paladin's of old ;—a man, moreover, who always impressed me as

carrying about with him, along with some cynicism and levity of speech and manner, a kind of silent creed or philosophy of life. The two friends were often to be seen at one in the morning sitting on opposite sides of the table in the little reading-room. And there would sometimes be other friends about that table.

This would probably be somewhere in the early seventies, a time when the modern critical and reform spirit was first active in this country. I remember well a certain journey which was made to the convention which nominated Mr. Hayes for President. A few persons who wished to see the convention, and who thought it might be possible for them to further in some way the consummation they had most at heart, namely, the nomination of Mr. Bristow,

started one afternoon from Jersey City for a thirty hours' journey to Cincinnati. There were perhaps half a dozen people in the car, all bound on the same errand and inspired by the same purpose. Mr. Stout was of this party, and several of his special friends, among them Albert Browne and George Dillaway. Arthur Sedgwick was one of the company. The road lay through scenery very familiar to me—followed the rich pastures of Dutch Pennsylvania and skirted the shores of the Susquehanna and the Juniata. The trip was one of the incidents of my life that I remember with the most pleasure. Few situations could be more agreeable than this, which permitted me to look out upon familiar and long-admired scenery and hear close at hand the discourse of valued friends upon a theme so dignified and of such

pressing practical importance as that which then occupied their minds. After that journey I saw a good deal of Mr. Stout. Later I went abroad, to stay a long time. But I saw much of him and of his family on visits to this country, and when I came back to live here in 1883. In 1884 he married, and his friends were very fortunate in that marriage. His young wife, who seemed to share his genius for friendship, chose to regard his friends as her own. We still had the social conversations of former times. For a good many years the same people dined at his house on Sixteenth Street on Sunday evenings.

On these occasions the mind and character of our friend would show forth very clearly. The talk perhaps ran on national or city politics, or some of the public enterprises with which he

was most closely interested. Or it was perhaps about people, and he took a great deal of interest in people. He knew people's histories very well, and was as likely as any one to give the just view of some individual who was discussed. Although there was gossip, there was no scandal and very little fault-finding. He spoke little against people, because he was too kind and had too much good breeding. He was a man with a capacity for strong dislikes, but he had arrived at that time of life when the discovery is made that one must be exclusive in one's animosities and cannot be at the trouble of disliking more than two or three people very much. I fancy that with him these were in most cases people of a past generation, whom for good reason he had learned to dislike in his youth. Of these

feelings he was tenacious, for tenacity was a part of his character. He clung to old feelings and habits of thought. For instance, although he was in later days a supporter of Mr. Cleveland, he still had in many respects the feelings of an old-fashioned abolitionist, and it was not difficult to call these feelings to the surface. Thus I don't think that it would have been pleasant for him to hear any one describe the members of the race which was the cause of the war by any other epithet than "colored." Although he had a great deal of ability for satirical perception, he much preferred to praise. It was his habit to set the tone of conversation with such a remark as "How well A is doing that work," or "That was a singularly good speech of B's," or to announce in a decided way a virtue or a talent which

he had discovered in some individual. With the keen satirical perception just alluded to he united a great deal of sentiment; the quality by some persons might have been called sentimentality. He had to a considerable degree that view of life which is entertained by young persons, and which finds expression in poems and novels. This was the result of the freshness of his mind.

As the talk on these Sunday evenings ran on public or private matters, on society or individuals, we could see that the great pleasure of our friend's life was the study of his kind. He was very human, and man, in whatever form he chanced to exhibit himself, was the one object of interest to him. The fact that he had never been compelled to follow a business, and had never been in one, here showed its effect upon him;

his leisure had allowed his mind, which was well suited for such an employment, to roam at large among the ranks of men and to derive great enjoyment from the spectacle. His interest in this pursuit was perhaps all the more real because it was unconscious, and because he followed the study for its own sake, and not, as so many of us writing people do, with the idea of making some kind of literary or other use of the instruction to be gained from it. But I am not sure that he did not have decided literary gift; that quality is one which inheres in the mind, its relation to ink and paper being immaterial. I used to notice, especially when the conversation was between ourselves, that his expressions had a truthfulness and a closeness to the fact which we whose business is writing appreciate, for it is only when

we speak so that what we say has any value. It was by this sort of unconscious study of mankind, I say, that his mind had been formed. Men had been his university. He was, however, interested in books, and fond of them. For matters of art he cared greatly. He knew a great deal about contemporary French art.

One or two more traits may be referred to. He was singularly a gentleman. Nobody, so far as I know, has ever succeeded in defining that character, and it is not a matter upon which one can say much. You can say no more of a man than to so define him, and you can say it in one word. A reflection or two, however, may be allowed one. I have always had a notion that intellectual ability was unfavorable to the finest aspects of the gentlemanly char-

acter, because likely to be accompanied by an aggressive or an exacting quality of mind, which is unfavorable to that character. Mr. Stout, however, was a man of superior intellect, and yet he was especially a gentleman; but in him there was so little that was exacting or selfishly aggressive. Might not one say this also, that a gentleman is likely to have a power of showing his mind clearly to you, that you see him face to face, while with a person of a different kind you see through a glass darkly? I am not sure that this generalization will hold, but certainly one of Mr. Stout's traits was an instinctive sincerity. His thoughts and feelings showed themselves most plainly in his countenance. He had a capacity for frankness and candor which is not common.

One very important trait should be

indicated. There was a great deal in him that was feminine. He had to an extraordinary degree that character sketched by Tennyson in one of his recent utterances :

“ While man and woman still are incomplete,
I prize that soul where man and woman meet.”

He had an almost womanly sympathy. Mr. Stout's sympathy for any kind of suffering was probably due in some degree to the long illness of his youth. I should not be surprised if the same cause had something to do with his very earnest feelings about slavery. But indeed sympathy was part and parcel of his character. All his many fine traits rested on the largeness of his heart, supplemented by an honest nature. With such a nature he could not help being a singularly true man in all

the relations of life. It seems to me that I have perhaps never known a man who was so good a son. Allusion has been made to his gift for friendship. In this he was unique. He was first of all a friend. A man who had won his esteem and affection stood apart, to his mind, from the mass of his fellows in a peculiar light. I may here record that he had a way of pronouncing the name of an attached friend which was of itself significant. He spoke the name in a manner and in a tone of voice which had something the effect of a prefix of nobility.

Such was the friend whom we have lost, and in such a manner as this he will always remain in our hearts. It was long before we could realize that we should see him no more, and it has been only by degrees that I have

lost the feeling that, by turning down the familiar street, I might find him again in the house in which I have enjoyed so many hours of easy intercourse. After we have lost such a friend, it is no doubt true that we still continue to go about our daily occupations and amusements much as we have done before. But the memory of him is none the less with us. Time does not in the least blur the outlines of his character as they remain in our minds. Indeed, I think those traits grow clearer as they recede, and that the character of our friend stands out in a light more and more distinct as time goes on.

FRANCIS AQUILA STOUT

A STUDY

By Gen. John Meredith Read



RANCIS AQUILA STOUT belonged to a noble type of American manhood, one which may well serve as an example for coming generations.

Why? Because, endowed with a vigorous intellect, and in the possession of an ample inherited fortune, he never supinely enjoyed prosperity. His mind

was constantly alert, and his physical and mental energies were incessantly employed in advancing the largest public interests, while never neglecting the many minor fields of usefulness which exist in a great metropolis like New York. His efforts were unceasing, through a long series of years, in behalf of many of the noblest charities which found their development under the impulse of his suggestive and philanthropic treatment.

Mr. Stout was born in the city of New York on October 21, 1833, and died at the Thousand Islands, July 18, 1892. He belonged to a historic family of English origin. His paternal grandfather owned and resided in the famous Philipse manor-house, now the city hall of Yonkers. His father, Mr. Aquila G. Stout, who was named after Colonel

Aquila Giles, a distinguished officer of the Revolution, was a wealthy and prominent merchant who became president of the Eagle Fire Insurance Company in 1846, and continued in that office until he died, in June, 1858. His abilities as a financier were in great demand. He was for a long time a director of the Leather Manufacturers' Bank. It was said of him that he was a credit to any corporation, and that his every act was marked by nobility of purpose.

Mr. Aquila G. Stout married his cousin, Miss Anne Morris, the daughter of Lieutenant William Walton Morris, who served during the Revolutionary War as lieutenant of artillery in the Continental line. Her grandfather was Colonel Lewis Morris, who signed the Declaration of Independence, whose grandfather, Richard Morris, was the founder

of the manor of Morrisania. Among Colonel Lewis Morris's brothers were General Staats Long Morris, M.P., the governor of Quebec who married the Duchess of Gordon; and Gouverneur Morris, a member of the Continental Congress, assistant minister of finance during the Revolution, one of the framers of the Constitution of the United States, and minister to France in the trying period from 1791 to 1794. It was Gouverneur Morris who endeavored to save the life of Louis XVI., failing in which, he loaned two hundred thousand francs to Louis Philippe, and performed many other generous acts toward the French people.

There is an interesting family association connected with another brother, General Jacob Morris, who was an ancestor of Mrs. Hamilton Fish, and the

great-granduncle of Mr. Francis A. Stout. General Jacob Morris was married in 1765, at the country seat of the great-great-grandfather of General Meredith Read; while his great-nephew already mentioned, Mr. Stout, married one hundred and twenty years afterward the eldest daughter of General Meredith Read, the friendship between the two historic families having begun in 1673.

The education of Mr. Francis A. Stout, when very young, was pursued for a short time under the direction of the Rev. Dr. Hawkes, but a larger portion of the formative period of his life was spent under the care of that lovely and distinguished man, the Rev. Dr. Henry A. Muhlenberg. Dr. Muhlenberg had the happy faculty of discovering the natural but often latent bent of a boy's character. If it was toward

evil, he taught his pupil how to overcome and uproot it, and replace it by noble aspirations which would eventually make him a useful and honorable member of society. But where he found a nature like that of young Stout, filled with genuine generosity and an instinctive charity, with an active sense of duty and an earnest desire to be of use to those about him, the doctor's pleasure was openly manifested. So highly did he estimate his character and gifts that young Stout became his favorite pupil. To any one who enjoyed the friendship or even the acquaintance of Dr. Muhlenberg, it requires no effort to imagine the extent and value of his influence. In the case of young Stout it began with their first association, and it lasted until death. The writer often listened in his youth to the discourses of Dr. Muhlen-

berg delivered at the Church of the Holy Communion, and the memory and the influence of the gentle author of the hymn, "I would not live alway, I ask not to stay," survive with unabated force.

The home influences and the social surroundings of Mr. Stout were likewise of the highest description. From his father he learned the lesson of individual integrity and of that fine sense of honor which was one of his own peculiar characteristics. From him, also, he insensibly gleaned a vast amount of practical information with regard to the business interests and the charitable needs of the great metropolis in which he was born. Through him he made the acquaintance of the most influential financiers of his native city, and in the accumulation of practical knowledge

was aided and assisted at each step by parental example.

His mother, also, was and is one of the most remarkable women of her generation. Possessing an original genius which was inherent in all of the older generations of the Morris family, she added to the powers of an active mind the accumulations of a spirit cultivated with indomitable energy from infancy to age. There was no subject too small, there was no question too large, for her observation and analysis. Enjoying a wide acquaintance in the most cultured as well as the most fashionable circles of New York, which were largely recruited from her own family and its connections, she maintained an influence and a supremacy in society which were undisputed. She early awakened in the heart of her son a leaning toward steadfast

friendships. His own nature taught him to select his friends with care, but when once chosen to continue true to the end.

Young Stout's boyhood was passed in the midst of delightful associations which included the agreeable people in the neighborhood of his father's country seat, and the family circle which remained at the mansion of his great-grandfather, General Lewis Morris, an estate which was cut up into lots and sold just after the Civil War. The residence of his great-granduncle, Gouverneur Morris, was also the scene of frequent visits. The Lewis Morris house is gone, but the Gouverneur Morris house still remains very much as it was in the lifetime of that distinguished man. It is situated at the foot of One Hundred and Thirty-seventh Street east,

New York, where a large iron gateway opens to the grounds which slope to the East River. This fine old historical house, however, will soon also probably go, for the estate is to be divided into lots and sold within the next two years. It is a comfort to know that an exact picture of it is preserved in the "Magazine of American History" of June, 1892.

To mention the family intimates and associates in those days would be to call the roll of representative names in the society of the period, not only in New York and its vicinity, but also in Washington, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Newport, and Boston.

Among the charming spots that were familiar to young Stout were the residences of the Carys at Chelsea and at Nahant, Massachusetts. The common

ancestor of the distinguished families of Cary of Massachusetts and of Virginia was William Cary, mayor of Bristol, England, in 1546, sprung from the Carys of Devonshire, to whom Lord Hunsdon belonged. The Carys were the center of a most agreeable set, and were intimate associates of the writer's connections, the Otis family of Boston. The home life of the Carys is charmingly set forth in the delightful "Cary Letters" recently privately printed. These include a journal written by Miss Harriet Otis, a daughter of Hon. Samuel Allyne Otis, during a visit to Saratoga, which is in the possession of her grandniece, and the writer's cousin, Mrs. Samuel Eliot *née* Emily Marshall Otis. In writing to her father, Miss Otis says: "In the retreat of this most estimable family I have found, year after year, a felicity

connected with all the best feelings of my heart—a felicity which, were I always to enjoy it, would tie my feeble, unaspiring heart too closely to the world, which would seem innocent and pure as that of our first parents. I can hardly recollect a period when Chelsea did not seem to me the most delightful abode I could imagine.”

The writer remembers meeting, in his youth, in Paris, Mr. Thomas Cary and his two daughters, who were there with the Motleys. Mr. Motley was at that moment greatly engrossed in researches for the second volume of his history of the Netherlands. One of Mr. Cary's daughters married Professor Louis Agassiz, and the writer remembers well the tribute which that celebrated man paid to his wife almost the last time he saw him. He said: “When I wish to

produce one of my scientific volumes I ask my dear wife to come into my library, and I sit down there and talk to her steadily for several hours. She then gets up and goes away, and at the end of the week she brings me, in classic English, the entire substance of my talk, thrown into one or more chapters. It is in this manner that all my later works have been produced."

Young Stout possessed that kind of organization which, governed by a tact springing from the heart, both affords comfort and attracts sympathy. He was the most manly of men, and at the same time there was in him a fiber of feminine tenderness which endeared him to all who knew him. It was curious and interesting to see how in each circle into which he might enter, whether at home or abroad, he laid hold of the

attention of individuals and won their esteem and regard.

Under the informing mind of Dr. Muhlenberg he pursued his classical and mathematical studies with becoming ardor, and fitted himself for entrance into the sophomore class in Columbia College. But at this moment in his career, in the pursuit of health, it was deemed advisable to give him an ocean trip, and to continue his studies in the brilliant atmosphere of Paris. He was left alone in that gay capital at an age when most youths would have been carried astray by their surroundings. But there was in him a steadiness of purpose, a devotion to the matter in hand, which kept him faithfully at work in an atmosphere filled with every seduction. His education at this period was pursued with such vigor and success that he was soon

qualified as an engineer, and it was this fact and these special studies which led him afterward to originate and push forward the New York State survey.

At the close of his foreign sojourn he returned to New York and read law, thus filling his mind with precedents and principles which greatly increased his usefulness in after years. A little later he became the private secretary of the Hon. Hiram Barney, collector of the port, who is still alive in a green old age, and speaks with affectionate respect of Francis A. Stout.

The practical character of Mr. Stout's mind was constantly manifested in the confidential office which he held, and which was likewise peculiarly fitted to call forth the delicacy, tact, and upright diplomacy which distinguished him in dealing with difficult questions or per-

sons. There is a subtlety of intellect which is associated with, and springs from, intrinsic integrity combined with a judicial judgment. This Mr. Stout possessed in a high degree. It was essential to him always to know the truth, and even where its discovery proved the presence of an injury to himself, he covered the fault with the mantle of his abounding charity.

Just as the possibilities of a large field of usefulness were bearing fruit, and the world on all sides looked bright and full of hope, young Stout was stricken by a long and lingering illness, which brought out the many manly and unselfish traits of his character. Lying upon his back for several years, and enduring that kind of imprisonment which women bear with peculiar courage, but which men shrink from with instinctive

horror, he supported his sufferings with a manly patience which excited the love and the respect of all his friends. During this weary period he applied himself to the reading of the best literature, and to the cultivation of those studies which formed the basis of his subsequent career. In these pursuits he had the wise support of his maternal uncle, Mr. Arthur Morris, who possessed the most delightful talent for conversation, and who illustrated his themes by the most original and apt examples. In the after-dinner talk of Mr. Stout, the writer was constantly reminded both of Mr. Arthur Morris and of Mr. Stout's mother. Although these family resemblances were strikingly evident, there was in Mr. Stout an individuality of form and idea.

It was at this time that his mind was especially directed to the public and

private charities of New York, and to the needs and wants of classes of the community who were still uncared for, and during the long watches of the night he evolved many thoughts and ideas which afterward found their place in the origin or development of some charitable work. He became, also, what he continued to be until the end of his life, an assiduous reader of the daily press, both of his own and of foreign countries. Rejecting useless items, he systematized the daily life of the world, and pursued or corrected opinions thereon with a pertinacity which nothing could withstand. Like Charles Reade, the novelist, he assimilated and used a vast amount of practical information which he had derived from the columns of the different journals; so that, if you asked him a question as to the situa-

tion of a certain subject, he was at once ready with a correct reply.

There is nothing that so distinctly tests friendship, and the power of an individual to evoke it, as a lingering malady. Mr. Stout clearly showed at this period the extent and depth of the affection which he had awakened. His days were cheered by the presence of hearty sympathizers, who brought him news from the currents of daily life, and informed him of an atmosphere social, literary, scientific, and charitable, into which his state of health did not allow him to personally penetrate. In the course of these many interviews he exchanged views which had arisen in his mind, and there went forth from his sick-chamber a direct influence for good, which bore fruit in many useful ways. After his recovery—for his vigorous

constitution eventually asserted itself— Mr. Stout never practiced a profession or actively engaged in business, except in connection with the supervision of estates and of his private affairs. He possessed one extraordinary gift, which was the keynote to his success and influence. He had the power of rendering the dryest subject attractive and interesting through his original and picturesque manner of treating it. The sources of his information seemed also to be inexhaustible. You might ask him a question upon almost any conceivable subject, and he would also have something useful and suggestive to say about it. Suggestiveness lay at the base of his genius. In considering a subject for the first time, his method of looking at it, his way of examining it, were full of suggestions that set on foot trains of

thought in the minds of all who listened to him.

Mr. Stout was not a literary man, and yet he possessed the literary faculty in a high degree. If he was interested in a subject his mind was so permeated by it that he either threw out his ideas himself, in a trenchant, incisive, and attractive style in the periodicals of the day, or he suggested and formulated in the mind of another articles which bore the stamp of his individuality. I have known him to suggest a paper and to mark it out, not only in its outlines, but in its details, in such a characteristic and graphic manner, that his hearer carried away not only the thoughts enunciated, but even their color and vivacity.

After his marriage, in 1884, his home became the center of a delightful circle, who enjoyed hospitalities which were

unceasing. Blessed with a young and beautiful wife who had received her education abroad, and whose cultivation and tastes were in entire unison with his own, and whose family had been strong allies of his own family in the most trying moments of the country's history, he manifested in a remarkable degree his powers of adaptation and of sympathy, which enabled him to win the earnest affection and deep devotion of one so much younger than himself.

Gradually there assembled in their salons and around their table a group of persons who, while fashionable by position and association, were seriously devoted to beneficial labors in the community at large. These were reinforced by the younger generation just setting forth upon the voyage of life, and whose

ideas and characters were influenced and formed for good by the unpedantic and sprightly conversation which carried with it an undertone of serious intent.

Remembering Mr. Stout's training as a civil engineer, we are not astonished to find that a congenial subject so entirely possessed his mind that in working it out to its legitimate result he became the father of the New York State survey. He found that the first official map of New York was prepared by C. J. Sauthier and was published in 1779, and that this map embraced most of the tracts and patents of land granted by the colonial government, exclusive of the land granted within the bounds of the present State of Vermont, and that a marked feature of it was an attempt at topographical delineation. In pursuing his investigations he reviewed the

labors of a federal court appointed by Congress, and of which his wife's great-great-grandfather, George Read of Delaware, "the signer," was one of the commissioners to determine an important controversy in relation to territory between New York and Massachusetts.

His attention was next directed to the second map of the State, which was prepared by Simeon DeWitt, who had served as geographer of the United States in the Revolutionary army, under the immediate command of General Washington, and was appointed in 1784 surveyor-general of the State of New York, a post which he filled for nearly half a century. DeWitt's map was based upon his own surveys when in the United States service, and upon documentary evidence in the State archives, and first made its appearance in 1802.

In 1829 Burr's atlas of the State of New York was printed, after being officially revised by the surveyor-general and controller, the former being Simeon DeWitt. By act of the legislature it was published at the expense of the State. Mr. James Terry Gardiner, the distinguished director of the State survey, says: "While it has served, like its successors, the purposes for which it was chiefly intended, that of delineating as fully as possible the artificial condition and progress of the State upon a mere skeleton of natural features, it has not served the great economic purposes to which properly constructed maps, based upon reliable surveys, are applicable in any country, and especially in this commonwealth, whose natural advantages are second to those of no section of like extent upon the face of

the globe.” Mr. Gardiner further says “that the errors and deficiencies of the best maps hitherto published are the unavoidable results of imperfect surveys; for the only way of securing an accurate map is to cause a careful survey of the State to be made by experienced surveyors, using the most perfect instruments known to the profession. The surveys which have been made, being fragmentary and disjointed, and made by surveyors of varying qualifications, must necessarily abound in error; and as these errors have become more widely known, attention has been officially called to them, from time to time.”

These facts, which Mr. Stout had gleaned for himself many years before the above words were written, made the deepest impression upon his mind. In pursuing his inquiries he found that

while it was true that the subject had been alluded to by various State officials from time to time, no real progress had been made toward an accurate survey of the State. He now set about a thorough examination of the results obtained by the United States coast survey, which had established a series of stations in the southeastern part of the State, and of those of the "United States lake survey, which were approaching from the westward and planting stations," says Mr. Gardiner, "on lakes Erie and Ontario, and the river St. Lawrence. Those independent, but reliable, systems of triangulation, gratuitously established and carried forward by the general government within our borders, served as standing examples for imitation, and as a forcible appeal to our own citizens and legislators to utilize them

with the consent of the national authorities in charge, as parts of a general system, that should ultimately be made to cover the entire State, and thus furnish the requisite bases for uniform and accurate local surveys, as well as material for a reliable official map of the State. The way having thus been prepared," continues Mr. Gardiner, "it remained for some man or body of men to initiate an effective movement in this direction."

The man who stepped to the front and initiated this important work was Francis A. Stout. By his suggestion and under his direct impulsion, the American Geographical Society in the autumn of 1875 appointed a committee to examine into the necessity for a State survey. The composition of that committee is an indication of the manner in which Mr. Stout managed to obtain

assistance in carrying out any great project to which his time and energies were pledged. He did not have himself named chairman of the committee, but he put forward the president of the society, retaining only for himself a membership of the committee. In the transactions of this body he held the laboring oar, and as the result, Mr. Gardiner informs us that the committee found and reported in substance that there had never been an official survey of the State; that there was no topographical map of its surface, and that the maps published by private parties were grossly erroneous, the misplacement on them of important towns and cities often amounting to several miles. The vigorous representation of these facts to the legislature of 1876 resulted in an appropriation for making an ac-

curate trigonometric and topographical survey of the State, and in the appointment of seven commissioners to conduct the same.

Mr. Stout was the life and soul of the body of men who brought about this important work. From that day to the time of his death he never ceased to labor in season and out of season in behalf of a cause with which his name will always be most intimately associated. On his tomb there might well be engraved these words: "Here lies the father of the State survey."

That the writer has not exaggerated the extent and value of Mr. Stout's services in this respect may be clearly seen from the following extracts from a letter addressed by Mr. Gardiner to Mr. George Dillaway, one of the intimate friends and executors of Mr. Stout:

“ From 1873 to 1875, when, as geographer in charge of the geological and geographical survey of the Territories, my headquarters were in Washington, Mr. Stout, then vice-president of the American Geographical Society, made several visits to the offices of the survey, and manifested a very lively interest in the careful topographical surveys that were then being made of Colorado. It was at this time that I think Mr. Stout first felt the possibility of securing for the State of New York a thorough topographical survey which should result in maps similar in character to those of advanced European countries, with which he was familiar.

“ He had investigated for himself the wretched condition of the maps of the State of New York, and the inaccurate surveys upon which they were based ;

for in 1875, when the overstrain of exploration forced me to resign my position, with no prospect, as the physicians told me, of ever being able to resume the rough work in the western mountains, Mr. Stout came to me at once, and laid before me his conception of an accurate and thorough topographical survey of the State of New York, asked me my views regarding the feasibility of it, and stated his determination to bring the matter before the attention of those who could control political action, and to push it by every means, until its necessity and importance were felt, and its execution begun.

“ I state these facts in order to make it clear to you that the conception of a State survey of New York, based on a triangulation of the highest order, *was entirely due to Mr. Stout*, and that he

came to me with the purpose and plan thoroughly matured in all its general features. He stated to me that he had been waiting only to find a man who could carry out his ideal before attempting to establish the survey. I aided Mr. Stout in the perfection of his plan, in technical details, and, at his request, prepared for the Geographical Society a paper on the subject of a topographical survey of New York, its necessities, its methods of execution, and its cost, which should serve as a basis of a plan of action.

“During the year 1875 Mr. Stout devoted time and energy to interesting the president and prominent members of the Geographical Society, Governor Tilden, and many men prominent in political life. Among others, he interested Dr. Hayes, the Arctic explorer,

who was elected a member of the legislature. As soon as the legislature met, a bill was prepared, and Mr. Stout went with me to Albany, taking letters of introduction to many prominent politicians, who afterward became firm friends of the survey.

“In my judgment, the passage of the bill organizing the State survey in the spring of 1876 was due principally to the untiring efforts of Mr. Stout. We often went to Albany together in this matter, and I was a constant witness of his untiring and unselfish public spirit.

“When the survey was organized, Mr. Stout was appointed one of the commissioners. Hon. John V. L. Pruyn, of Albany, was chairman of the commission. Among Mr. Stout's associates were Governor Seymour, Vice-President Wheeler, Hon. Robert S. Hale,

President Barnard of Columbia College, Lieutenant-Governor Dorsheimer, and other distinguished men. By this commission I was chosen director of the State survey and had selected my chief assistants, when the opposition of the controller of the State made it evident that the money appropriated would be held back for a year. By these means the controller hoped to stop the survey, to which he was much opposed. At this point Mr. Stout stepped forward and offered to advance from his personal means the sum necessary to carry on the survey for the first year, the fact being that the first year would necessarily be devoted to a reconnoissance for the primary triangulation, and preparation for the beginning of that important work. Through Mr. Stout's prompt help I was able to go forward and carry

out all that was necessary for the first year, and when at last the controller was obliged to pay the vouchers, I was able to return to Mr. Stout all that he had loaned to the survey.

“The work then went straight forward, delayed only by the constant annual struggle for appropriations in the legislature. Both the public and the legislature had to be educated to the importance of this scientific work. In the long and constant efforts that followed, by which the annual appropriations were secured, Mr. Stout’s time and means and influence were given, and his most encouraging help and brave spirit were my inspiration and support, until the work was at last brought to a close by Governor Hill’s veto of the appropriation in 1885. The work of triangulation that was done is complete

in itself, is of the highest order, and remains as a secure foundation for any superstructure of topographical work that may hereafter be made.

“The survey, which was Mr. Stout’s conception, resulting in completed topographical maps, he did not live to see realized, although the plan was supported by the scientific men of the whole country. But of the wisdom of the plan and of its future execution, when the people of the State shall become more intelligent, and the politicians more under the influence of the intelligent classes, there can be no doubt. When at last, instead of the present crude and inaccurate maps of New York, the scientific world and the public have at their command a true topographical map of the State, I hope it will never be forgotten that the concep-

tion of this work, and the foundation upon which it rests, were due to the enlightened foresight and the unselfish efforts of our dear friend, Francis A. Stout."

In the intervals of a busy life, Mr. Stout found time to attend to his duties as a trustee of the Greenwich Bank for Savings, as a director of the South Carolina Railway Company, as a trustee of the New York Society Library, and as the very active and able senior vice-president of the American Geographical Society. He was also connected with various other literary, scientific, and charitable institutions in New York City. Among the latter were: the Orthopedic Hospital; the New York Asylum for the Blind, a State institution of which he was for twenty-five years a trustee and supporter; the Cancer Hos-

pital; and the Samaritan Home for the Aged, wherein he held high office and exercised great influence; and he was for many years chairman of the meetings of the State "Charities Aid" Association. His important charitable labors were internationally known, and received ample recognition throughout Europe at the time of his decease.

Although Mr. Stout had distinguished family connections in the South, he sympathized from an early period with the abolition movement, and belonged to the Republican party. He was unceasingly active in support of the Union during the Civil War, and served as a special policeman in the draft riots in 1863, in New York City. It was at this time that he rescued and concealed in his own house the Hon. John Jay, who was an object of hatred to the

mob. Mr. Jay passed many anxious hours in an upper chamber of the house in Ninth Street, only venturing out for a few moments after midnight to get a breath of fresh air. These two warm friends and connections further cemented in these trying moments a friendship which had originated years before. In this emergency Mr. Stout evinced that cool courage and far-sighted judgment which always distinguished him in moments of peril.

There was another civic duty from which he never shrank. Whenever called to serve upon the grand jury he came forward with alacrity, and so directed his investigations and so shaped his conclusions that valuable results invariably sprung from any initiative that he might take. The position of a grand juror is not an inviting one; it

is hedged with difficulties; it is surrounded by discomforts. The man who willingly accepts such functions and performs them with all honesty, and with entire devotion to the public weal, deserves to be ranked among the highest benefactors of the community.

While seldom accepting office at the hands of the national government, Mr. Stout was deeply interested in all national issues and questions. His theories with regard to hard money and the national banking system were well defined and inflexibly maintained. He was one of the trusted friends and political counselors of New York's war governor, the Hon. E. D. Morgan, who had the highest opinion of his political sagacity and foresight. In many of the important measures introduced into the senate by that eminent statesman, the

ideas and views of Mr. Stout are largely represented. As a mark of intimate personal esteem and respect, Governor Morgan, a short time before his death, presented to Mr. Stout a magnificent pair of carriage horses, which survive to-day as memorials of the close relations existing between those two distinguished men. And here one may be permitted to enlarge upon Mr. Stout's remarkable power of making and retaining friends. He had that sympathetic quality of mind and heart which led him to rejoice whenever he heard of the success of even a mere acquaintance; but when his friendship was really enlisted, there was no end to the exertions he put forth. If there was anything to be done to advance the interests of the individual, he left no stone unturned, he neglected no opportunity, and he event-

ually triumphed, no matter how much time was required. This quality was readily recognized even by those who were but superficially acquainted with his many other admirable traits; and when he died, throughout the many circles wherein he was known, both at home and abroad, each person felt a keen sense of loss, and as if one of their earthly ties had been severed.

Geography was one of Mr. Stout's favorite fields of study. Although vastly informed in this direction, he continued to be always an earnest inquirer, who, keeping abreast of the discoveries of the age, was enabled, from time to time, to suggest new themes and new problems for solution. His reputation was of the highest among geographical students in all parts of the world, and the writer has heard some of the most

eminent European savants mention him in terms of the highest praise. His interest in geography led him into the investigation of the feasibility of a transcontinental canal through Nicaragua. After exhaustive research he became convinced both of the possibility and the paramount necessity of such a waterway ; and, as a patriotic American, he desired that it should be under government control, foreseeing the gigantic advantages which our government would eventually derive thereby. Upon the organization of the Nicaragua Canal Construction Company, his extended knowledge, his executive ability, his large influence, and high character naturally led to his being elected president.

The extent and variety of his labors, including international correspondence,

while holding this office, can scarcely be adequately indicated in such a place. After most arduous work in America and Europe, he resigned on account of a difference of opinion upon the financial theories which should govern the company; and even those who differed from him felt, and did not hesitate to say, that the corporation had lost a most honorable, high-minded, and able administrator. The formal resolutions of the board of directors of the company, which were unanimously passed upon his retirement, emphasized this view.

We have referred to Mr. Stout's long and active association with the American Geographical Society, of which he became a fellow in 1860, was made honorary secretary in 1870, and held office as second and eventually as senior vice-

president from 1872 to the time of his death, in 1892. As early as 1865 the American Geographical Society issued a commission to Mr. Stout, as their foreign corresponding secretary, to visit Europe for the purpose of representing the society in kindred institutions, and to establish a more perfect system of exchanges of books, maps, charts, tables, and other geographical and statistical information with the various European governments. The official organ of the society says: "Historical geography especially attracted Mr. Stout's attention, but he took a deep interest in every branch of the science, and closely followed its progress. He enriched the library of the society with valuable gifts, including rare atlases of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and costly illustrated works; and

measures for the advancement of the association and the increase of its usefulness called forth his wise criticism and suggestions, or enlisted his hearty coöperation.

“He was the representative of the society in the International Congresses held at Antwerp and at Berne. His dignified bearing and strict courtesy told of long culture and a wide experience of life, while those brought into closer relations with him learned to appreciate his acute and vigorous intellect, and to rely upon the sincerity of a nature made for friendship.”

It was in 1891 that Mr. Stout attended the Geographical Congress at Berne, Switzerland, as one of the American delegates, and was appointed a vice-president of this important scientific gathering, which included the most

distinguished names in geographical science. The paper which he read at that time upon the Nicaragua Canal was never reported in full. It was listened to with close attention, and its remarkable analysis, its learned yet attractive statistics, were followed with eager attention and with repeated applause. Mr. Stout was particularly happy as a presiding officer. He united great courtesy and gentleness to quickness of perception and decision, to which his habitual dignity lent impressive force. At this congress, as in former ones, he largely increased his circle of friends and admirers, and when the news of his death reached Europe the sorrow expressed was genuine and enduring.

Mr. Stout possessed the true geographical spirit. He was not content simply to read the travels, adventures,

and researches of others, but he became a traveler of keen perception and observation, who never forgot what he saw, and who always saw even the most minute things. His love of nature was one of his charms. After he had thoroughly explored all the beauties of the North American and European continents, he recommenced his journeys and renewed his investigations. He liked to ascend some vast mountain-chain and commune alone with the evidences of God's greatness; and when he returned to the haunts of men he brought with him new and invigorating inspiration, and that originality and freshness which close conversation with nature alone can awaken.

In 1873 Mr. Stout, at the request of the State Department, assumed temporary direction of the office in New York

of the commission to the Vienna Exposition. He was afterward appointed a commissioner of the United States to Vienna, where his tact, urbanity, and wisdom solved more than one difficult question. He was also a commissioner from Nicaragua to the French Exposition of 1889. He accepted this trust in order to bring the question of the Nicaragua Canal more directly to the attention of European nations. His task was a delicate one, for M. de Lesseps had absorbed the attention of France with the Panama Canal, and it required infinite tact and the influence of a powerful personality to obtain the official and public ear. He found in the person of his friend Mr. Medina, the Nicaraguan minister in Paris, an able and congenial coadjutor. As the result of the judicious labors of these two gentlemen,

public attention was widely attracted to a superb model of the proposed Nicaragua Canal, which was exposed in the Nicaraguan section of the exposition, and was so realistic in its character that the lakes, rivers, and canal sections were filled with water.

The difficulties of the situation were in no wise concealed, but the engineering problems were in each case met and successfully demonstrated and determined on the model, and before the eyes of the spectators. It can be easily understood that success crowned all the efforts of Mr. Stout, and that in spite of the delicate position in which he was placed, owing to the antagonistic interests of the Nicaragua and Panama canals, his high character and scientific attainments were recognized by the French government by the bestowal

upon him of the dignity and insignia of
"Officer of Public Instruction."

Mr. Stout's charming qualities of mind and heart were delightfully evinced in his home relations. Living unmarried until middle life, his filial devotion was at every instant manifested; and after his marriage his constant care was bestowed upon his aged mother, who felt that she had not lost a son, while she had gained a daughter. And there never was, moreover, a man more thoroughly fitted to make his home life a happy one. His delicacy of feeling and his uniform kindness manifested themselves at every turn, and the variety of his ideas and conversation lent a vivid interest to daily intercourse. In the decoration and embellishment of his home he was also unsurpassed. He was one of the most cultivated and

learned authorities upon art and bric-a-brac, and his house bears witness to the accuracy of his taste and the extent of his knowledge. His acquaintance with art was not confined to sculpture, painting, and architecture. It extended to the theater and to the opera. He was always to be seen on first nights when any remarkable play was to be put upon the stage. His love of music also had been scientifically trained by a close study of the work of the best masters and of their reproduction in Europe and America. A simple air would carry him from grave to gay. While thoroughly conversant with the heavy German school of Wagner, he preferred the lighter and more human touch of French and Italian genius.

Mr. Stout's father had purchased an estate at Newport upon which he erected

a residence at a period when cottage life had scarcely begun—the same year and by the same builder as the cottage of George Bancroft. In early boyhood the writer spent several summers at Newport, and can only remember at that time the cottages of Mr. Sidney Brooks, George H. Calvert, Mr. Richard Derby, and those of the Bruens and the Middletons of South Carolina. At that time hotel life prevailed. The Atlantic House, the Ocean House, the Fillmore, and the Bellevue, each had its fashionable coterie. Bellevue Avenue could not be said to exist, and one made his way through countless gates which were opened by young urchins who were glad to pick up the pennies showered upon them.

After the death of the elder Mr. Stout his son turned his attention to the em-

bellishment of his place. Having a genuine talent for landscape gardening, he eventually produced really marvelous effects in that enchanting home upon the cliffs whereon now stands the marine residence of Mr. W. K. Vanderbilt. Mr. Stout, moreover, succeeded in producing in his hot and cold glass-houses some of the most exquisite tropical fruits, and the orchids which he grew formed an important chapter in floral culture. He was one of the founders of the old Newport Reading-room, that most delightful resort where before the war the representative men of the North and South were wont to gather in social converse, and the historic names of the country were most agreeably illustrated. It was a little earlier than this that the writer remembers the visit of Henry Clay to Newport. The old statesman

was sadly broken, and when the men embraced him and the women kissed him, and he heard him on all sides spoken of as a *great* man, the extremely youthful writer was puzzled to understand how such a term could be applied to such an enfeebled specimen of humanity.

In the last century Newport was the resort of representative Southern families, and Mr. George Mason, in his "Reminiscences," records the visit of the writer's great-grandfather, George Read, the signer, at the close of the Revolutionary War. Newport continued to be a place of Southern resort until the Civil War, and among those most warmly received was Colonel Magruder, then in command at Fort Adams, who afterward became the famous Confederate general.

We have seen that Mr. Stout was a "Christian gentleman given to hospitality." There was another agreeable phase in his many-sided life. As a member and frequenter of the foremost clubs of New York, and of many like associations in the country at large and abroad, he will long be remembered as an eminently clubable man—that is to say, one saturated with the amenities of life, and so unobtrusively informed upon a wide range of subjects, and so rigidly careful of the feelings of others, as to weave many threads of friendship, and to leave a distinct void when called away. There are choice coteries in all of the older clubs, who were for years closely associated with Mr. Stout, and who will cherish his memory as long as life lasts. The writer recalls the moments fraught with pleasure passed

with Mr. Stout in years gone by at the Union, the Knickerbocker, the New York Yacht, the Union League, the old Newport Reading-room, and the Century clubs. The thought of those experiences brings into memory many eminent and charming friends who have passed over to the majority, and includes an equal number who now lament the unexpected departure of a tried and true friend.

In his love of mountain-climbing and in his devotion to yachting Mr. Stout exhibited the robust leanings of his English ancestors. He took the deepest interest in the New York Yacht Club, and within a comparatively short time of his death attended its annual regatta. As an owner of a yacht himself, he made many cruises and showed himself to be an able amateur naviga-

tor. He had distinctly the real yachting spirit, for he loved long voyages under sail, and detested the mechanical progression under steam. I am speaking of him now as a yachtsman, for he likewise dearly enjoyed ocean trips upon the great Atlantic steamers. The sea in every shape interested him, and it is a question which delighted him the most, the bracing atmosphere of the mountains and the changing hues of their snow-clad summits, or the salty sting of a sweeping sea-breeze.

Mr. Stout took a lively interest in the Metropolitan Club, of which he was one of the founders, and was fully convinced that it would become one of the great representative clubs of the world. The writer has spoken in another place of Mr. Stout's connection with the Republican party, but it must be said that his

sympathies were not enlisted in behalf of a high protective tariff. Indeed, his independence in this particular was the result of extended studies and of supreme convictions. His position and opinions were so well known as to lead to his election, in 1880, as an honorary member of the Cobden Club.

Mr. Stout was an always welcome member of the "Round Table," a dinner club which holds in New York the same position which the "Diner des Spartiates" has so long maintained in Paris. In the give and take of this brilliant group of men, Mr. Stout's conversational gifts were readily acknowledged and appreciated. His power of listening was as remarkable as his power of talking. The former faculty grew out of his innate courtesy, and his eagerness for information. This earnest

interest in every conceivable subject contributed largely to his success.

Mr. Stout was not only a typical American of the best school, characterized by the broadest views of national patriotism, but he was also a typical New Yorker. Associated through his family with the foundation, the traditions, and the progress of his native city, he was devotedly attached to the metropolis where his youth and mature manhood were principally passed. Knowing intimately and appreciating thoroughly the advantages and beauties and manifold charms to be found in the society and the collections of foreign capitals, he always returned to his native place with renewed affection, which grew with his years and deepened with his experience. There was no New Yorker who had more thoroughly ex-

plored the sunny and the mournful sides of the great city. A welcome guest in that innermost select circle of social life to which he belonged by birth, instinct, and accomplishments, he still was thoroughly acquainted with the painful and distressing phases of human life scattered throughout less smiling districts. His abounding charity led him to seek out the deserving poor, and to join in the various charitable undertakings which ministered to their various needs.


The quality of human sympathy so pervaded his daily life that when he died there was a universal expression of grief from every class in the community, which found its way not merely through the public press, but through innumerable private channels. It was touching to hear the words of sorrow which were spoken by old servants who

had long since gone away, and these evidences of respectful admiration were echoed by those who had remained in his service. In looking over the countless letters received upon the occasion of his death, one is struck by the unanimous tribute to his character as a friend, as a man of large and superior intellect, of great strength of character, governed by a tender appreciation of the feelings of others, and of remarkable executive ability, which were combined with a patriotic foresight and wisdom, entitling him to the respect and regard of his countrymen. In foreign countries his loss was unanimously deplored, and the consensus of the public press universally praised his high character, his delightful social qualities, his superior gifts of mind, and his charitable and scientific labors.

The best representation of his powerful and sympathetic face is the imperial photograph by Eugene Piron which the "Figaro" displayed in 1891 in its gallery of distinguished men.

THE NICARAGUA CANAL

By Commander Henry C. Taylor

T is fitting that some record of Mr. Stout's connection with the Nicaragua Canal should appear in any account of his life and services, for among many evidences of his ability and public spirit no one is more striking than his efforts to bring forward that great enterprise.

It was at the close of President Arthur's administration that the efforts hitherto made to interest the commer-

cial world in the canal were given up, and a treaty was negotiated between the United States and Nicaragua, having for its object the construction of the canal by our government. This treaty was pending before the senate when Mr. Cleveland became President, and he was not slow to withdraw it from the senate, and to announce his disapproval of it. He gave his full approval to the enterprise, but declared it to be the work for private capital and energy, supported indeed by the good-will of the government, but distinctly not work for the government itself to undertake.

It was at this time, in the spring of 1885, when the prospects of the canal seemed to be at their darkest, that a gentleman interested deeply in the matter and who had studied it attentively was discussing the canal with Judge

Daly, the veteran jurist and geographer, when the judge, who shared in the disappointment of those interested in the canal, said, after some reflection: "There is one man who may do much to forward this great undertaking. I know of no one who could do so much. It is Mr. Francis A. Stout, the vice-president of the Geographical Society. He alone possesses the rare combination of business qualities and financial knowledge joined to the capacity to appreciate and sympathize with a vast public work. I will take you to him, and if he will join in the work I have great hopes of the future." A little later, at a dinner at Mr. Stout's house, the state of affairs was laid before Mr. Stout, who was found to be already thoroughly conversant with the general features of the canal, and recognizing perhaps more

than any one who has ever been connected with the enterprise its true relation to the world's commerce, its overpowering influence upon American trade and shipping.

At various interviews in the month succeeding this dinner, Mr. Stout mapped out with great clearness to Judge Daly and a few others the general plan of operations which he advised should be adopted. This plan had for its aim to bring the canal to the notice of the business public generally, and through them to the leading financiers. His plan was broad in its conception and most skilfully worked out in its details, and no sooner was it accepted by the little group, who gladly followed his wise advice, than he threw himself personally into the vigorous working out of his own plan.

From that time forth, under his wise leadership and counsel, the enterprise was steadily brought forward to the notice of the public, and men of the best standing throughout the country were clearly shown the solid value of the undertaking from a business standpoint, and its large importance as a national and international enterprise. It was to Mr. Stout's wide knowledge of and acquaintance with eminent men in America and abroad that the project was largely indebted for the high character of the group which formed the nucleus of the great company which has since grown out of it.

When that company was formed Mr. Stout was its first president—an office he accepted with reluctance when urged to do so by such men as the late Mr. Frederick Billings and other old friends

of the canal, and from which he later withdrew, though continuing always to strive for the success of this noble work.

But it is in the original promotion of the project that his name will be always remembered as one whose faithful and valuable service and leadership sustained the hopes of the friends of the canal, and when this great waterway is completed, when ships are sailing freely between the oceans, and when the commerce of the world lavishes praise upon the founders of a work so precious to them, then prominent among those founders will be inscribed the name of Francis A. Stout, to whose wisdom, intelligence, and devotion the Nicaragua Canal is so largely indebted.

NOTICES OF THE PRESS

From the New York Times



R. FRANCIS A. STOUT, whose death at Alexandria Bay Monday was announced in the "Times" yesterday, was a man very highly regarded by a wide circle of friends. He had never been in business, and, perhaps, owing in part to the fact that his health had been at no time strong, had never been very prominent in public affairs. And yet he had always been a most public-spirited and

patriotic man. He was one of those men of fortune and family position whose sympathies, during the decade which preceded the war, were strongly on the antislavery side. A generous and warm-hearted man, he hated oppression in all its forms, and was from his early days a friend of the slave. He was interested also in the philanthropic enterprises of the war time. Without having taken a leading part in politics, he has always been active in the movements for reform in city and national politics. He interested himself also in many public and charitable institutions. He was one of the vice-presidents of the Geographical Society. His most conspicuous relation, however, of late years, has been as president of the Nicaragua Canal Construction Company, which enterprise

owed its auspicious beginnings and the favorable reception given it by the country largely to his wise and tactful management. Mr. Stout was of New York origin, and, with the exception of a residence of some years' duration in Paris, had always lived in New York. He was greatly attached to this city, and cared to live nowhere else. His father was, we believe, from Westchester County, and was connected with the shipping interest; his mother was a Miss Morris of Morrisania. In 1884 he was married to a daughter of General Meredith Read, who survives him; he is survived also by his mother and sister.

It is as a man and a friend that Mr. Stout will be best remembered. His social relations have been very extensive. He was a member of many clubs,

the Century, the Union, the Union League, the Knickerbocker, and others, and he has always been much in general society. The fine qualities of his mind and heart, his humor, his perceptions, keen, if very kindly, his knowledge of men, his great acquaintance with art and affairs were widely recognized. But perhaps his most remarkable quality was his gift for friendship. Sincere, affectionate, particularly a gentleman, full of that quality difficult to define but known as good-fellowship, he was quick to recognize and appreciate these traits in men. But, although a friend of many men, there were a few for whom he reserved a special place in his regard, and by whom he will be profoundly missed. For them, however, his life and qualities will always be a grateful recollection.

From the New York Evening Post

FRANCIS A. STOUT, whose funeral took place yesterday, was a type of a patriotic and public-spirited American worthy of all imitation. Thirty years ago it was not so usual as it is now for a man of independent means to give his service to the community and the country. It was thought that an American without an occupation must live in Paris or Nice, that there was nothing here to employ him. But Mr. Stout at that day found his happiness in giving his labors to his country. Since the war he had been very active, although in an inconspicuous way, in all movements of reform and in the general service of the public. His work for

the State survey, the Nicaragua Canal, and other public objects may be mentioned. He brought to this work a mind of great natural strength, a sound and just judgment, and unsurpassed tact and knowledge of men. It is the opinion of those who knew him best, that, had his health been more vigorous than it was, he might, with his strong intellect and his great skill and tenacity of purpose, have risen very high indeed in any line of work he might have undertaken. He was a man absolutely to be trusted. So much may be said of him on the public side. On the social side, Mr. Stout had a lively interest in so many phases of society, art, and affairs, in life, in short, as to make him most delightful and welcome company. It may be added that in the opinion of those who knew him most

intimately he had the greatest gift of friendship they have ever known. One other quality should not escape notice: he was one of those who illustrate the truth that the character of the gentleman is not a convention, but a reality, with a sure and permanent foundation in human nature, for he possessed that character to an eminent degree.

From the Albany Argus

FRANCIS AQUILA STOUT, another prominent citizen of New York, has passed away. He was born in the city of New York, October 21, 1833. His father was Aquila Giles Stout, an eminent merchant of the city, and for many years president of the Eagle Fire Insur-

ance Company. His ancestors on his father's side were English Quakers, and on his mother's side he was descended from one of the oldest and most distinguished families in the United States, his great-grandfather being Lewis Morris, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence and a general in the Revolutionary Army, and his greatuncle being Gouverneur Morris, the famous and historic minister to France during the French Revolution.

Mr. Stout was educated as a civil engineer in this country, and afterward took a regular course of study abroad, but, having inherited a handsome fortune, he never practiced the profession. He was active all his life in charitable works, and was for a number of years a trustee of the "Greenwich Bank for Savings," a director of the South Caro-

lina Railway Company, vice-president of the American Geographical Society, a trustee of the New York Society Library, the New York Institution for the Blind, the Samaritan Home for the Aged, and was also connected with other literary and charitable institutions in the city of New York. Mr. Stout was most active in the support of the Union during the Civil War, and served as a special policeman in the dreadful draft riots of 1863 in New York, being under fire many hours. He took a prominent part in the movements that resulted in the establishment of the State survey. Having been led to perceive the urgent need of a trigonometrical survey of the State of New York from observing errors in existing maps, he interested the American Geographical Society in the subject, and subsequently was particu-

larly active in securing the passage of the act providing for an accurate trigonometrical and topographical survey of the State. He was also most interested in the Nicaragua Canal project, and was the president of the first company formed in recent years to carry on that great work. During the last exposition in Paris he was commissioner for the republic of Nicaragua to the exposition, and for his work and ability displayed in that office received from the French government the decoration of Officer of Public Instruction.

Mr. Stout was a man of the highest culture and refinement, and of the most loyal patriotism—one of those old-time gentlemen whose high character and noble lives have done so much in the past to make our country what it is.

He leaves a widow, the eldest daugh-

ter of General Meredith Read and sister of Major Harmon P. Read of this city.

From the Galignani Messenger

THE HON. FRANCIS AQUILA STOUT, son-in-law of General Meredith Read, died suddenly of pneumonia on Monday evening last, at the Thousand Islands, Alexandria Bay, N. Y.

Mr. Stout was the senior vice-president of the American Geographical Society, one of the founders and commissioners of the New York State survey, and formerly president of the Nicaragua Canal Company. He was educated as an engineer in Paris and as a barrister in New York. Possessing an ample fortune, he devoted him-

self assiduously to scientific studies and to charitable works, and was president and director of many important charitable associations in New York. His vigorous intellect, his large experience, his varied culture, his charming manners, and his honorable character won him a multitude of warm friends both in America and Europe, who will deeply feel his loss. Mr. Stout belonged to a historic family. His paternal grandfather owned and resided in the famous Philipse Manor-house, now the town hall of Yonkers. His maternal great-grandfather, Colonel Lewis Morris (great-grandson of Colonel Richard Morris, first Lord of the Manor of Morrisania), was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence; and his great-granduncles were General Staats Long Morris, M.P., and Governor of

Quebec, who married the Duchess of Gordon, and the Hon. Gouverneur Morris, member of the Continental Congress, assistant minister of finance during the Revolution, one of the framers and signers of the Constitution of the United States, and minister to France from 1791 to 1794. Mr. G. Morris tried to save the life of Louis XVI. Failing in this, he lent two hundred thousand francs to Louis Philippe, and performed many other generous acts toward the French people.

Mr. Stout was one of the commissioners to the French Exposition of 1889, and one of the vice-presidents of the Geographical Congress at Berne in 1891. He married several years ago the eldest daughter of General Meredith Read, who was educated at the Convent of the Assumption at Auteuil.

His wife survives him, also his widowed mother, who, at the age of eighty-seven, is in full possession of her vigorous faculties, and his sister, Mme. de Vaugrigneuse, the widow of the Baron de Vaugrigneuse, formerly French chargé d'affaires at various European courts.

RESOLUTIONS OF SOCIETIES

By the Geographical Society



R. FRANCIS A. STOUT, one of the vice-presidents of the American Geographical Society, died on the 18th of July, 1892, at the Thousand Island House, Alexandria Bay, N. Y.

Mr. Stout was a native of New York City, and here received his early education. He studied engineering in Paris and afterward read law in this city, but he never entered upon a professional or business career. Inheriting a fortune, he devoted himself to scientific and lit-

erary pursuits, and, in a large sense, to social obligations; and he was actively engaged in the work of many important charities. He was one of the founders and commissioners of the Trigonometrical Survey of the State of New York, and, for some years, president of the Nicaragua Canal Company. He became a fellow of the American Geographical Society in 1860, was made honorary secretary in 1870, and held office as a vice-president from 1872 to 1892.

Historical geography especially attracted Mr. Stout's attention, but he took a deep interest in every branch of the science, and closely followed its progress. He enriched the library of the society with valuable gifts, including rare atlases of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and costly illustrated works; and measures for the

advancement of the association and the increase of its usefulness called forth his wise criticism and suggestion, or enlisted his hearty coöperation.

He was the representative of the society in the International Geographical Congresses at Antwerp and at Berne.

His dignified bearing and even courtesy told of long culture and a wide experience of life, while those brought into closer relation with him learned to appreciate his acute and vigorous intellect, and to rely upon the sincerity of a nature made for friendship.

By the New York Society Library

FRANCIS AQUILA STOUT was elected a member of the board of trustees of the New York Society Library in 1875.

His distinguishing characteristics of order and method, prudence and caution, fidelity and devotion, coupled with unfailing urbanity in affairs and uniform courtesy to all, constituted him a most valuable and most valued member.

Seldom absent, his good sense and sound judgment were ever at the service of the institution. Educated at one of the most famous schools of Paris, his thorough knowledge of the French language would have rendered him one of the most useful members of the Library Committee on which he had just been appointed.

By the death of Mr. Stout a vacancy has been created not easy to fill.

To his colleagues of the Board, some of whom enjoyed the privilege of his intimacy, his loss is not to be measured

by any ordinary words or customary expressions of regret.

Confronted by the seeming inadequacy of the language at their command to render in any fitting way the scope and depth of their feelings, this Board unwillingly contents itself with adopting this feeble minute.

By the Samaritan Home for the Aged

AT the time of his death Mr. Stout was vice-president of the Executive Committee of this society.

The committee held a meeting on August 26, 1892, when Mr. F. M. Bacon acted as secretary. The minutes show that the following resolution was passed and Mr. Bacon requested to send a copy to Mrs. Stout:

“Resolved, That by the death of Mr. Francis A. Stout the Samaritan Home for the Aged has lost a very valuable and dear friend.

“Since 1874 he was a member of the Advisory Committee; since 1879 a member of the Executive Committee, and since 1883 its vice-president.

“By his uniform courtesy and urbanity of manner he endeared himself to his fellows on the Board, and by his excellent judgment and punctilious performance of duty he won the respect of all and rendered very valuable service to the society.

“Resolved, That the members of this Committee tender their heart-felt sympathy to the family of Mr. Stout, to whom the secretary is requested to forward a copy of these resolutions.”

By the Institution for the Blind

Extract from meeting of the Board of Managers of the New York Institution for the Blind, at meeting held November 2, 1892.

Resolved, That by the death of Francis Aquila Stout the New York Institution for the Blind has lost a tried counselor and a warm friend. He was for twenty-four years a manager of this institution, and during all that time he never failed to perform with cheerfulness and zeal any duty to which he was assigned.

He had the welfare of the institution much at heart, and took a deep interest in all that concerned the education of the blind. By his uniform courtesy he endeared himself to all with whom he came in contact.

His judgment was excellent and counsel highly valued.

Resolved, That a copy of these resolutions be sent by the secretary to the family of Mr. Stout, with an assurance of the deep sympathy of each member of this Board.

F. AUGUSTUS SCHERMERHORN,
Secretary.





LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



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